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EAST HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL

Testimony of Renée Seufert
School Counselor, East Haven High School
in opposition of

S.B. 1095 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS
Education Committee - March 1, 2023

Representative Currey, Senator McCrory, Representative McCarty, Senator Berthel, Vice Chair Leeper, Vice Chair Winfield and esteemed members of the Education Committee, my name is Renée Seufert and I am a School Counselor in East Haven, CT at East Haven High School and a member of Connecticut School Counseling Association and American School Counseling Association. Thank you for the opportunity to offer **testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 1095 - AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS.**

I have grave concerns regarding the language in **Senate Bill 1095 (ii) that individuals who are school counselors, social workers, psychologists, aides or other staff members and have appropriate training and ongoing supports may be assigned the duties of a school resource officer.**

- While I respect the role of our School Resource Officer and work collaboratively with our SRO in respect to meeting student needs in the building, much of what the SRO's role entails is in direct conflict with my role as a School Counselor. Specifically, I am talking about controlling student behavior, through restraint or force if necessary. My role is to be an advocate and support for students in the building, which is a far cry from restraining students who are out of control or being responsible for safety and crime prevention in schools.
- If it is not the intention of the legislation to have me trained for this purpose, then the language of the bill needs to be much clearer than the phrase: "assigned the duties of a school resource officer", and to specify which aspects of those duties might appropriately overlap my current expertise. I have no interest in being trained to have any physical or forceful control over students.
- My role as a School Counselor is to support students' social/emotional needs, academic performance, and college/career readiness. I do this through a variety of modes of interaction with students, inclusive of (but not limited to): individual meetings, short-term brief counseling, educating through classroom sessions, assemblies, presentations, small groups, developing accommodation and Individual Education Plans, actively participating in Early Intervention Team and Attendance Review Committee meetings, School Improvement Team, GSA Advisor, college and career searches and application processes, financial aid and scholarship committees, collaboration with parents, teachers, administrators, medical and mental health providers, pupil



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services, coaches, etc., credit checks, course selection and scheduling, FLEX/Advisory teacher, DCF reporting...and so many more.

As you may suspect by the list I just provided, School Counselors are already stretched way too thin to be able to fully meet the needs of our students. The list above does not even mention all the other things we are responsible for which are not part of our training or our professional School Counselor duties, such as lunch duty periods, administrative tasks, data collection, summer school enrollment, registration of new students and interpretation of transcripts, fundraising and supporting families in need, ALICE training for safety...the list goes on.

The needs of our young people are great and the human capital to meet those needs is already minimal, at best. Adding more responsibilities, especially those that run counter to our professional objective of developing positive relationships with students and families to best support their social/emotional, academic, and career goals, is not in the best interest of students, nor of School Counselors for that matter.

I would ask that you modify this bill. School Counselors should not be doing the work of the School Resource Officer as it is in direct conflict with the work and role of the School Counselor.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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